AMENDMENT

In the Claims:

Please amend instant claims 2, 5, 8 and 17, as follows

1. (previously presented) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition selected from the group consisting of powder coating compositions and, aqueous coating compositions, said composition comprising:

(a) 30 to 60% by weight of a phosphorous containing material which decomposes to produce phosphoric acid when the coating is exposed to fire;

(b) 10 to 30% by weight of a thermosetting binder;

(c) 2.5 to 10% by weight of a curing agent for the thermosetting binder; and

d) 5 to 40% by weight of a thermoplastic binder,

wherein each of the thermosetting and thermoplastic binders comprise groups that react with the said phosphoric acid, thereby imparting charring and blowing functions to the intumescent coating composition.

2. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the total weight of the said thermosetting and thermoplastic binder ~~system~~ accounts for 30% or more by weight of the composition.

3. (previously presented) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the phosphorous containing material is a sodium, potassium or ammonium polyphosphate.

4. (previously presented) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the thermosetting binder is a hydroxylated thermosetting resin.

5. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the thermosetting binder ~~resin~~ is an epoxy resin.

6. (previously presented) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the curing agent for the thermosetting binder is a phenolic curing agent.

7. (canceled).

8. (currently amended) A fire retardant intumescent composition according to claim 1 wherein the thermoplastic binder is an aldehyde or ketone resin.

9. (previously presented) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 containing 0.1 to 10% by weight of a melt viscosity modifier.

10. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 9 wherein the melt viscosity modifier is hydrogenated castor oil.

11. (previously presented) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 containing 1 to 10% by weight of a colouring agent.

12. (original) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 11 wherein the colouring agent is titanium dioxide.

13. (previously presented) A fire retardant intumescent coating composition according to claim 1 containing one or more additives selected from the group consisting of a china clay, melamine phosphate, vitrifiers, metal salts and melamine.

14. (previously presented) A fire retardant intumescent powder coating composition as claimed in claim 1,

further wherein, the said composition is made by a process comprising premixing the said components (a)-(d), extruding the premix, and grinding the thus formed extrudate to form a powder.

15-16. (canceled).

17. (currently amended) A composition according to claim 14 wherein the thermoplastic binder ~~resin~~ is an oxygenated heterocyclic thermoplastic resin.

18. (previously presented) A composition according to claim 17 wherein the thermoplastic resin is an aldehyde or ketone resin.

19. (canceled).